

1487. e. 31

The Nature and Blessedness of Preparation for Death.

A

FUNERAL DISCOURSE

OCCASIONED BY THE

DEATH of MISS. SOPHIA VOWELL,

Who Departed this Life, Dec. 7th, 1790,

In the 16th Year of Her Age.

BY WILLIAM BENNET.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED SOME

L E T T E R S

Written by the DECEASED to

A YOUNG FEMALE ACQUAINTANCE.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1791.



OUR worthy FRIEND and PASTOR having obliged us with the SERMON he preached on the Death of our very dear Daughter SOPHIA; many of our friends, who heard the discourse, and were partial to the lovely deceased, were desirous of having a copy of it, together with some of the LETTERS she wrote to her young intimate acquaintance: but as the transcribing of so many as were wanted would have been highly inconvenient, a number have been printed to comply with their request. And it is thought proper to add, that the LETTERS are printed *exactly* as she wrote them, without any alteration of *sentiment* or *language*. That the perusal of the whole may be truly blessed to such young persons as were particularly acquainted with the dear deceased, and to many others, is the sincere and earnest prayer of the afflicted

PARENTS.

Leadenhall Street.

On the 1st of January 1841, I was
in the city of London, and was
very much interested in the
state of the country, and was
much surprised to find that
the state of the country was
very different from what I
had expected. I had heard
that the country was very
poor, and that the people
were very poor, but I found
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1841

London, 1st Jan 1841

BRETHREN AND FELLOW-MORTALS,

I AM now called in providence to attempt the improvement of an event which speaks loudly to us all as *dying* creatures, and more especially to those in the morning of life ; I mean the death of a truly amiable and hopeful young person at an age when the stroke is peculiarly painful ; when the beauties of her mind began to open and reward the culture of parental anxieties ; when the delicate plant, which had been nursed with so much care, blossomed and shed its fragrance to all around ; when more than a mother's eyes looked upon her with pleasure, and admired the excellency of her spirit so enriched with unaffected piety.

The hearts of many, wounded by such a stroke, will long bleed, and suffer anguish in proportion to her endearing worth. But *their* loss is *her* unspeakable gain. Thrice happy she that commenced a course of devotedness to God so early, and finished it so soon, having escaped from all further danger of apostacy, and obtained a perfection of holi-

ness and joy in the presence of her God and Saviour ! I would therefore direct your thoughts to the following portion of Scripture, which is highly applicable to the present providence, and affords the most quieting considerations to afflicted parents and friends in the loss of so desirable an object, while it likewise holds forth the great duties of personal religion in the most interesting point of view :

MATTHEW, XXV. 10.

AND WHILE THEY WENT TO BUY THE BRIDEGROOM CAME, AND THEY THAT WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE MARRIAGE, AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT.

THESE words are part of the solemn and instructive parable of the *Ten Virgins*, which, with several others, Our Lord delivered to his Disciples on the Mount of Olives, respecting the signs of his coming and the end of the world. Hereby we are taught the mixed, imperfect state of the visible church on earth ; —the extreme folly and danger of those who content themselves with the form of godliness, destitute of its power ; —the great need which
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even real Christians themselves have to watch against spiritual sloth ; the high importance of habitual preparation for death ;—the felicities into which the godly shall enter immediately upon their dissolution ;—and the dreadful rejection of others who have only assumed the *exterior* of religion.

These things are exhibited in strong and glowing colours, under the similitude of a public eastern marriage, which sometimes was solemnized in the *night* ; the bride being attended with a number of virgins, her companions, who, upon the bridegroom's approach, went forth with lamps to meet him, and conducted him into the house, where the nuptials were celebrated with great festivity. The distinguished Personage here intended by the bridegroom is Our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was the Son of God, so far humbled himself as to assume the nature of fallen man, that he might recover sinners from their apostacy to the enjoyment of celestial honours and felicities ; and having, by his obedience unto death, obtained eternal redemption for such as were given him of the Father, ascended into heaven to prepare mansions of glory for them,—whence, in due time, he will come

again to receive them unto himself, that they may be with him to behold his glory. This his coming we may understand either of DEATH or of the FINAL JUDGMENT, the former of which will determine the character and unalterably fix the future state of individuals against the latter. And of this event are all professors in certain expectation, whether they come under the description of the *foolish* or the *wise* virgins; for *it is appointed unto men once to die*. But, what an awful difference will then be found between the one class of professors and the other!—a difference which will overwhelm the former with terror and confusion, and eventually place them in as wide a separation from the latter, as the darkness and misery of hell are from the light and blessedness of heaven! Awakened from their stupor by the midnight cry, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him!* these will then find, to their everlasting shame, that their *lamps are gone out*;—the glimmering of their profession has become extinct;—their speculative notions have fatally deceived them, and their self-flattering hopes now for ever take their flight. Fain would they share in the *graces* of the godly, that they might partake of the *glory* which awaits these. But neither is grace to be conveyed from one creature

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ture to another, nor have the most eminent saints more than is necessary to their own salvation. Unprepared for the solemn event, they are driven to the greatest extremity of distress, and in the final issue are for ever shut out from the celestial kingdom !

How awful would it be to our minds, how unspeakably aggravating to the grief of bereaved parents, under the present providence, were we about to contemplate a case so mournful as this ! But, blessed be God, the joyful reverse is before us. We have no reason to doubt respecting our deceased young friend, that she was one of those virgins *which took oil in their vessels with their lamps*, and included in *their* happiness, of whom it is said in the text, that when *the Bridegroom came*, *they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut*.—What I propose, then, from these words, on the present occasion, will be,

First, To open the nature of *Preparation for Death*, in *which* sense I shall here consider the Coming of the Bridegroom.

Secondly, To point out something of their Blessedness after Death, who are so prepared

for it. And Thirdly, To conclude with a brief account of what rich free grace wrought in and bestowed on our deceased young friend, in hopes of quickening and encouraging others to imitate her good example.

I begin, then, with opening *The Nature of Preparation for Death*, which I shall consider under the following common distinction, viz. *a change of heart by grace*, and *a change of state through faith*; without meaning to enquire which of these ought to be considered as *prior* in the order of Gospel blessings. Both are of essential moment to secure the soul's great interest for eternity, and they are inseparably connected in the plan of our salvation.

1. Preparation for death includes a *change of heart by grace*, or the renovation of the inward man by the power of the Divine Spirit. For, *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*. John, iii. 3. Descended from a fallen head, the whole human race is become degenerate and corrupt. The principles of moral evil are sown, and have struck deep root in our very nature; on which account we are taught to acknowledge ourselves *shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin*. Ps. li. 5. And, in consequence

consequence hereof, from our childhood we readily fall in with such temptations as are suited to work upon the sinful propensities of our hearts. With all the advantages of instruction, restraint, and pious example, still we are *alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in us because of the blindness or hardness and perverseness of our hearts.* The love of sin is natural to us, as fallen creatures, and has a prevailing ascendancy over all the faculties of our minds. We have no relish of, nor delight in, spiritual objects and pursuits, but, on the contrary, our affections are earthly and sensual. Experience and observation unite their testimony with the scriptures, that *all flesh have corrupted their way upon the earth.* Gen. vi. 12. *The hearts of the sons of men are set in them to do evil.* Eccl. viii. 11. *And they drink iniquity like water.* Job xv. 16. But the Lord our God is HOLY—essentially and unchangeably holy. *He is light, and in him is no darkness at all. He is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity;* nor shall any thing that defileth, or is unclean, enter where he dwells. The society, the employment, the enjoyments of the heavenly world, are altogether holy. Hence an inward change by grace becomes indispensably needful, to prepare any one for

a dying hour with comfort. The mind, which is full of darkness and prejudice, must be enlightened in the knowledge and love of the truth. The will, which is strongly set in opposition to God, must be reconciled, and bowed in cheerful subjection to his authority. The stony heart must be changed into an heart of flesh. The strong predilection for earthly happiness, which naturally sways the judgement and affections, must yield to a fixed desire after, and delight in, spiritual and heavenly blessings. In a word, the soul must be brought to take up its rest in God—to love him supremely, to make an unreserved surrender of itself into his hands, and cleave unto him with purpose of heart.—This is that change of the inward man, which is wrought in every real saint by the power of the divine spirit co-operating with the outward means of salvation. And in whomsoever this good work is truly begun, there is the seed, the earnest, the commencement of glory.

2. Preparation for death includes also *a change of state through faith*, or of that relation we stand in to God as our lawgiver and judge. Our natural state is a state of *guilt* and *wrath*; both as we are involved in the ruinous consequences

quences of the first transgression, and as our personal iniquities have been multiplied before God. For *through the offence of one, judgment came on all men to condemnation.* Rom. v. 18. *Both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, as it is written, There is none righteous, no not one.* Rom. iii. 9, 10. And, if the moral law were to take its course against us, we should all most certainly perish; for, *by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight.* Rom. iii. 20. The best obedience of a sinful creature neither can atone for his past offences, nor have the smallest efficacy towards procuring him a title to eternal life. In this respect *the law is become weak through the flesh*, and, *as many as are of the works of the law, or who depend thereon for salvation, are under the curse.* Gal. iii. 10.

But, blessed be God, tho' we have destroyed ourselves by our iniquities, help is laid for sinners on one that is mighty. *What the law could not do, in that it was weak thro' the flesh, God hath done, by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.* Rom. viii. 3, 4. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a*
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curse for us. Gal. iii. 13. He has brought in everlasting righteousness, for the justification of his people, by his perfect obedience unto death: and this is revealed from faith to faith. It is made known in the testimony of God concerning his Son, which is the ground of faith, as the meritorious cause of their acceptance who trust in him for salvation, and therefore is the object of faith. And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. Acts, xiii. 39. Faith in Jesus Christ, bringing the soul into a spiritual indissoluble union with him as a law-fulfilling surety, introduceth it into a state of peace and acceptance before God; in which every ground of condemnation is removed, and through the merit of Christ's righteousness imputed to the believer, he becomes entitled to eternal life. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through Our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Rom. v. 1, 2,

The sinner who is thus renewed in the spirit of his mind, and justified through faith, is happily prepared for his great change by death. The law no longer has power over him

him to condemn him, being found in Christ, sprinkled with his blood, and clothed in his righteousness. The spirit of holiness dwells in his heart, and is *the earnest of the heavenly inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession*, Eph. i. 14. Whether, then, the coming of the Bridegroom be sudden and unexpected, or the contrary, such thro' grace will be found ready, *made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*.

We are informed, however, that *the wise virgins arose and TRIMMED their lamps*, though they were enriched with oil, against the Bridegroom's approach; which may lead to a further distinction that is commonly made on this subject, between *habitual* and *actual* readiness for death; the one respecting the *principles* of grace and holiness seated in the heart, which are constant and abiding; the other denoting the *lively exercise* of these principles, with a serious and close application to all suitable means of preserving the heart in a spiritual and watchful frame. Those are, in this sense, prepared for their great change, who live near to God in prayer—who are daily renewing the surrender of themselves into the hands of Christ—who study much the empti-
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ness and vanity of the world—who keep their hearts with all diligence, lest they be ensnared by temptations—who are frequently anticipating their departure out of time into eternity—who make it their great business to mortify indwelling sin, to hold every creature in the hand of resignation, to die *daily* in expectation of dying *shortly*—and so to set their house in order, that when the solemn period shall arrive, they may have nothing to do but to die. And oh! how important a branch of Preparation is this, since in the midst of life we are in death! What peculiar advantage must arise to the real Christian from thus setting his house in order—that he has not the evidences of grace to collect, when their full force is most needed—but whenever his Lord comes, he is found waiting for his salvation! *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace. Ps. xxxvii. 37.*— This leads me, therefore,

Secondly, To point out something of their blessedness after death, who are thus prepared for it. *They that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.* Here is a figurative representation of the heavenly felicity, as the marriage-supper of Christ, and of their
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their perfect everlasting safety and security from danger, who are admitted to partake of it.

(1.) They that are ready when the Bridegroom cometh, *go in with him to the marriage.*—Their souls, being made perfect in holiness, do immediately pass into glory: a state of existence far above our highest present conceptions, whence all weakness and imperfection are for ever excluded, while knowledge, purity, and joy attain to their consummation. *For now, says the Apostle, we see thro' a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known.* They forthwith join the society of Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, with whom they will spend a blessed eternity, in celebrating the praises, and recounting the wonders, of creating power and redeeming love; their own harps being equally in tune with these for such sacred and delightful employments. They will unite with Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, in hymning forth the glories and praises of Jehovah, without the smallest discord in any of their notes.

And not only this—but they will also be admitted to have immediate fellowship with
CHRIST

CHRIST himself, the glorious object in whom they trusted for salvation; who redeemed them to God by his blood; and after whom the desires of their hearts have so long ascended. They shall behold him in all his glory, and be with him where he is, that their souls may completely be delighted with looking upon him who is *altogether lovely*—the medium of all divine communications—*the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*.—Then also, they will have the clearest discoveries, and the fullest enjoyment of the LOVE of Christ, in its height and depth and breadth and length; which will enrapture their souls, and kindle in them the purest and most fervent returns of gratitude and love. Thus shall they *sup with him, and be with them*; nor will the sacred pleasure that shall arise out of this immediate communion with their Lord, ever lose its sweetness, or abate of its soul-ravishing effects.

Yea, still higher will they rise in the scale of Celestial Blessedness, while, thro' the person of IMMANUEL, the great and ever-blessed GOD will reveal himself to them in all the glories of his nature, and their wondering adoring spirits shall be filled with inexpressible sensations of his love. For accordingly we
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read in Rev. vii. 14. and following verses—
*These are they which came out of great tribulation,
 and have washed their robes, and made them white
 in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before
 the throne of GOD, and serve him day and night
 in his temple, and He that sitteth on the throne
 shall dwell amongst them. And again (chap. xxi.
 3.), Behold, the Tabernacle of GOD is with men,
 and he will dwell among them, and they shall be
 his people, and GOD himself shall be with them,
 and be their GOD.*

Thus shall they who are ready when the
 Bridegroom cometh, *enter in with him to the
 marriage*; nor is it without great advantage to
 them, that it is added,

(2.) *And the door was shut.*—Much, indeed,
 might be gathered from this expression, of a
 solemn alarming nature to those who content
 themselves with only a religious profession.
 For while the godly, at their death, will be
 admitted into realms of glory, these will then
 have lost all further opportunity of access to
 the throne of grace. Now, the door of mercy
 stands open, and the Gospel Invitation is,
Whosoever will, let him come. But *there is no
 work, nor device, nor wisdom, nor knowledge in
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the grave. He that dieth *unholy*, will be *unholy* still. The ear of mercy will be closed against the cries of those, who trifled with the means of salvation upon earth. Their eternal state will be fixed irreversibly, when the seal of death is put upon their character.

But, I now consider the expression as denoting great advantages to them that die in the Lord ; similar to what we read in Rev. iii. 12. *Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the house of my God, and He shall go no more out.* While they tabernacled in flesh, they were exposed to many snares and temptations—liable to various enemies and dangers—subject to frequent affliction and sorrow. They wrestled not against flesh and blood only, but against principalities, against powers; against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. But, when once their disembodied spirits ascend to God, and have passed thro' the pearly gates of the heavenly temple, they shall abide in everlasting rest and security. *There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain, for the former things are passed away. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the*
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sun light on them, nor any heat: for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the Throne, shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Thus having opened the nature of preparation for death, and something of their blessedness who are so prepared for it, I shall draw towards a conclusion with,

THIRDLY, Giving you a brief account of what rich free grace wrought in, and bestowed upon, our deceased young friend; with the hope of quickening and engaging others to imitate her good example.

Miss SOPHIA VOWELL was the second daughter of Christian Parents, who gave her up to God from her infancy, and from the earliest dawn of reason took pains to lead her mind (as also those of their other children) into an acquaintance with the great principles of natural and revealed religion. When quite a child, she discovered a very thoughtful discerning mind, and took far greater pleasure in Reading, and in hearing instructive Conversation, than in the ordinary amusements of her age. As an illustration of which, her parents

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have assured me that, before she was *five* years old, she could repeat the Assembly's shorter Catechism with the proofs. The great delight which she took in hearing this opened, I have often witnessed, when for this purpose I used to meet the children of my friends in the Vestry. And I have good reason to hope, that, by what was addressed to them on those occasions, her early attachment to the word and ways of God was, in some measure, promoted.

Her natural temper was uncommonly sweet and engaging, which made it her delight to study the happiness of all with whom she was connected. Nor in this did she overlook even the servants in her father's house, whose kind attentions she acknowledged with warm expressions of gratitude. And towards her parents her behaviour was most exemplary, being uniformly marked with affection, respect, and readiness to prefer their judgment and pleasure to her own.

As she advanced in years, her thirst after knowledge and religious improvement increased; which induced her to spend most of her leisure hours in her closet, and, for the sake of redeeming time, frequently to rise so early

as four o'clock in the morning. These opportunities she employed, not in the perusal of *Novels* and *Romances*, which tend only to enflame the passions of youth, and to fill their minds with extravagant ideas of what is unworthy to be realized; but in prayer and converse with the Scriptures, and other instructive books, chiefly of a religious nature, in her choice of which she discovered no small degree of taste, as well as piety.

Her acquaintance with the evil of sin, and the sinfulness of her own heart, was deep and humbling, which made the gospel of Christ appear glorious and excellent in her esteem; and, for her years, she had a distinguishing judgment in what she heard. The very close attention which she gave to the subject-matter of discourses from the pulpit, and her concern to retain a savour of the truth, appear very fully from the strain of many of her Letters to a female correspondent, in which she recited, and improved, the outlines of what she had heard*. These, also, convey the clearest evidence,

* This was agreeable to a former proposal, which she made to her young friend by letter, wherein she says, ' If you have no objection, we will write on Sabbath evening, or Monday morning early, and give one another the texts,

dence, how her mind was habitually conversant with thoughts of death, and how much of a suitable frame she possessed, to make a spiritual improvement of all occasions and incidents, which directed her views to that interesting event.

Addressing her young friend, on the death of a brother, she observes, in one of these,
 “ And now, my dear friend, one of your
 “ earthly comforts is removed; I hope your
 “ mind will be more set upon heaven and
 “ heavenly things. I am sure my poor petitions are offered up to God for you, that
 “ this may prove a sanctified affliction! And
 “ as I hope and trust your departed brother
 “ is gone to the regions of everlasting bliss,
 “ you have only to mourn on your own account. It would be very unkind to wish
 “ him back to this our earth, which is so full
 “ of sin, and sorrow, and pain.” In another to the same, she observes, “ We are continually reminded that we are mortal, by the

‘ and our thoughts on the Sermons we have heard; which
 ‘ will make them more profitable to us, and I hope I shall
 ‘ then be able to remember more than I used to do; for my
 ‘ memory is very treacherous about remembering any thing
 ‘ that is good.’ And this practice she continued with growing advantage, as appears from many of her subsequent Letters.

“ indisposition

“ indisposition of ourselves, or the illness of
 “ our friends. Therefore, let us endeavour
 “ to prepare for that awful event, which is
 “ the only certain thing in this life. *It is*
 “ *appointed for all men once to die, and after that*
 “ *the judgment.* Oh may we be prepared to
 “ appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,
 “ clothed in his perfect righteousness! My
 “ father and mother are gone to ———,
 “ in ———, to see one of their relations in
 “ great distress, having just lost an only son,
 “ who died very suddenly, being found dead
 “ in his bed. Such instances of the uncer-
 “ tainty of life ought to make us examine
 “ ourselves, whether we are prepared, if it
 “ should please God to call us, in such a sud-
 “ den manner, out of time into eternity. If
 “ prepared, I think it a great happiness to
 “ have such an easy dismissal: for, to those
 “ that are, sudden death—sudden glory.
 “ May this be our unspeakably happy case!
 “ I wish, that God would give me a more
 “ thankful frame of spirit, for all his goodness
 “ towards me. If I look round, how many
 “ are there, far more deserving, who have not
 “ near so many comforts and conveniencies as
 “ I enjoy! I may well say, Lord, why am
 “ I thus favoured, far above thousands, who
 “ love thee more, and serve thee better?”

In another she wrote as follows : “ O, how
 “ happy must they be, who know that they
 “ are God’s children, and, when they read
 “ the many promises of his word, can apply
 “ these to themselves, and take the comfort
 “ of them ! May that be your happy case,
 “ my dear friend ! Oh ! may you see, that
 “ your inheritance is in heaven, where neither
 “ moth corrupts, nor thieves break through
 “ and steal ! May you know, that all things
 “ are working together for your good ; and,
 “ though afflictions for the present are not
 “ joyous but grievous, that afterward they
 “ work the peaceable fruits of righteousness !
 “ I have been reading a Hymn out of “ Songs
 “ in the Night,” one verse of which is exactly
 “ suited to myself, and I will here transcribe
 “ it :

I want to have my soul resign’d

Submissive to Thy will ;

I want a meek and humble mind,

I want my wants to feel.

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“ The last line is particularly expressive of
 “ what I want. Indeed, it is a most sweet
 “ Hymn. I wish I was like the young woman
 “ who

“ who made it, and could adopt all her language, through the book, as my own.”

Those lines, also, in Mrs. Rowe’s “*Devout Exercises of the Heart*,” she much admired, and often repeated :

Look gently down, Almighty Grace,

Prison me round in thine embrace ;

Pity the heart that would be thine,

And let thy power my love confine.

Even when she was at school, she sent a copy of them to her young friend with this remark, which breathes the spirit of sincerity ; “ Indeed, my dear friend, I can truly say, that those words are the language of my heart, and when I write or repeat them, I could almost fancy that I made them.”

One particular more, however, I cannot forbear to mention concerning the deceased, which is peculiarly striking and uncommon at her age, viz. that she not only spent much time in her closet alone (as before observed) in prayer and converse with the Scriptures, but frequently took her young female acquaintance thither, to pray with them, and to converse about the things of God. And, on

the evening before her younger sister went to school, she retired with her (as her parents have learned since her death) to talk seriously with her about the concerns of her soul, and commended her affectionately by prayer to the divine blessing.

Her last illness was short, and her dissolution not seriously apprehended very long before it took place. I had the great satisfaction to be with her while she was capable of conversing. She requested me to spend some time with her in prayer, "that it would please the Lord to grant her a full assurance, that she was one of his children;" at the same time telling me, that "she had no particular discouragement of mind; she had been helped to commit her everlasting interest into the hands of Christ, and on Him alone she relied for salvation." After prayer, I withdrew for a short season, during which she spoke with great affection to her sister, intreating her to be most tenderly attentive to her *dear* mother, and reminding her of the great uncertainty of life; that her brother would very soon follow her, and that it would not be long before, she hoped, they should all meet in a better world; "when," with the warmest

warmest emphasis she added, "I shall welcome
 " your spirit into the realms of glory."—
 When I returned to her bed-side, she expressed herself as enjoying a sweet sense of *peace with God through Jesus Christ*; thanked me very affectionately for all my kindness; and added, "I have not a doubt but my God and
 "Saviour will save me." She made an effort to have uttered more, which, from the broken sentences that I could collect, discovered a very happy frame of mind; and her last intelligible words were, *Absent from the body, present with the Lord.*

And now, what application and improvement shall I make of these things? How shall I express myself to *you*, the afflicted parents of the deceased? Shall I mourn or shall I rejoice with you under this providence? Your loss indeed is great. God has touched you in a very tender part. He has removed what might well be the desire of your eyes; nor doth he forbid you to weep, by way of relieving oppressed nature. *Jesus wept* at the grave of Lazarus. But yet, surely, my Christian friends, your Heavenly Father has given you a most reviving cordial under your affliction, in having favoured you with such clear and satisfactory evidence of his grace bestowed

bestowed upon her you so dearly loved. Nor could you allow yourselves to wish her return to earth, that you might enjoy the pleasure of her society. No ; she is safely escaped from every danger. She has finished her course well. She is now in the possession of all you could desire for her. She is appearing before God, in her white robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb. You, then, have abundant cause to bless God for the riches of his grace. Oh ! let this loss of a dear and dutiful child lead out your thoughts and affections more to heaven itself,—quicken you in your preparation to follow her,—and animate your prayers and best endeavours for the salvation of those yet entrusted to your care ! May the everlasting arms be underneath you both in *this* trying dispensation and in what *further* awaits you ! And may you experience, that *in the multitude of your troubled thoughts within you, the divine comforts delight your souls !*

Ought I not likewise to address a few words to the surviving *sisters* of the Deceased ; and to *you* more especially, my young friend, who have grown up with her from her infancy, and had such frequent opportunities to mark the excellency of her spirit and the amiableness of her conduct ? How very loudly doth
this

this providence inculcate the great uncertainty of life ! How persuasively doth it call on you to imitate her bright example ! And I would particularly press this upon you in two respects :—First, of secret prayer and closet devotion. Herein she took delight, and, I doubt not, enjoyed many gracious visits from the Lord. Oh ! let nothing prevent your closely walking with God in secret,—pouring out your hearts before him, and seeking to get your minds enriched with the knowledge of the Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation.—Secondly, in respect of dutiful, affectionate conduct towards your dear parents. This also was a striking feature in her character, an ornament of grace unspeakably precious ; and the recollection of it will give a sweet savour to her name so long as it shall be remembered. In this view, then, be it your ambition to excel, that your tender filial attention may console them under this loss, and, particularly, may alleviate the painful feelings of a bereaved mother ! Oh ! let this providence teach you that Religion is *the one thing needful*, and that the essence of religion consists in a devotedness of heart to God in Christ Jesus. Let it lead you, more importantly than ever, to the throne of grace,—

cause

cause you to set an higher value on God's word,—and quicken you in running the heavenly race, that, when you shall follow her into eternity, she may indeed *welcome your spirits into the realms of glory!*

Nor can I dismiss this providence without addressing myself, more generally, to the YOUTH of this assembly, some of whom were companions of the dear Deceased,—her intimate acquaintance and friends. What a solemn warning have you all, by this event, of your own mortality! How doth it inculcate the importance of beginning betimes to seek the Lord! And what encouragement may you draw from hence, that if you seek him with all your hearts, he will be found of you!—Many of you are the children of *pious* parents, who have offered many prayers to God on your behalf, and taught you the knowledge of his ways. Yet I must remind you, that your being born of pious parents will not avail unto your salvation, unless you experience a change of heart by grace, and are made partakers of faith in Christ Jesus. If you live and die without these, tho' your dear parents go to heaven, you will not be admitted there, but *the door will be shut* against you. Nor could you then

get

get it opened by all your cries and tears. *Now is the accepted time: Now is the day of salvation.* Salvation is a work to be begun in your hearts here; and you have the greatest encouragement in God's word to seek an interest in it. *I love them that love me, says CHRIST, and they that seek me early shall find me.*—Let me then beseech you, my young friends, to imitate *Her* choice example, whose death we have been attempting to improve. Give yourselves to prayer. Be much upon your knees before the throne of grace in secret. Beg of God that he will make you his children, and give you the comfort of *knowing* this for yourselves, that you may rejoice in his salvation. Read his precious word much, that your minds may be enlightened in the knowledge of his truth. Diligently improve the season of youth, in laying up for yourselves treasures in Heaven. And may it please God of his infinite mercy to grant, that you all may be *his, in that day when he shall make up his Jewels!* Amen!

not is opened by all your cries and tears. Now
it is my duty to say to you, that the way of salvation
is a work to be begun in your hearts
here; and you have the greatest encourage-
ment in God's word to seek an interest in it.
I love them that love me, says Christ, and they
that seek me shall find me—I feel no more than
believe you, my young friends, to imitate the
choice example, whose death we have been ac-
tempting to improve. Give yourselves to
prayer. Be much upon your knees before the
throne of grace in secret. Beg of God that
he will make you his children, and give you
the comfort of knowing this for yourselves, that
you may rejoice in his salvation. Read his
precious word much, that your minds may be
enlightened in the knowledge of his truth.
Diligently improve the season of youth, in lay-
ing up for yourselves treasures in heaven.
And may it please God of his infinite mercy
to grant that you all may be his in that day
when he shall make us his Xpress! Amen!

I have the pleasing news of informing you
that my dear old mother is much better
than when I left her this morning, which has

L E T T E R S.

My lovely mother will give me her cards
on New-Year's-day, and when I have got
one hundred, give me some more. It is not
fancied yet how many this is to get; and I
should be much obliged to you if, in your
next letter, you would send me some more.
I think the cards to get.

MY EVER DEAR FRIEND,

LAST Thursday, when we was at school,
I copied a verse on my slate out of
Mrs. Rowe's Devout Exercises of the Heart,
and gave it to you. I then said I would write
it out, and send you my thoughts upon it.
I will now write it here :

Look gently down, Almighty Grace!

Prison me round in thy embrace;

Pity the heart that would be thine,

And let thy power my love confine.

Indeed, my dear friend, I can truly say that
these words are the language of my heart, and
when I write or repeat them, I could almost
fancy that I made them.

I have

I have the pleasing news of informing you, that my dearest dearest mother is much better than when I left her this morning, which has given me better spirits.

My lovely mother will give out her cards on New-Year's-Day, and when I have got one hundred, give me some book. It is not settled yet how many Eliza is to get; and I should be much obliged to you, if, in your next letter, you will inform me how many *you* think she ought to get.

Oh my dear, now I think of it, pray write out those verses for me that your brother James wrote to me. I am very glad to hear that he is better, for your sake; for you seemed so uneasy, that it made me quite low to see you.

Adieu, my *very* dear and *ever* dear friend! and excuse every fault and imperfection in your very faithful, sincere, and affectionate friend,

SOPHIA VOWELL.

P. S. In my other letter I mentioned that there was two faiths; one, saving faith; and the other, the faith of miracle, which many men had—that is, in the primitive times.

Hackney,

Hackney, Nov. 11, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I BEG that you will not read this letter till you are in a very grave humour.—Mr. Bennet has given us two excellent discourses to-day, and I hope that they will not be to me as water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again, and I sincerely pray to *GOD* that they may be blessed to *me*. The text in the morning was in the second of Corinthians, xiii chap. and 5 verse: “Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.” And he made a very excellent sermon indeed; and in the afternoon he preached from these words in the xxvii psalm, and 13 verse: “I had fainted unless I had believed, to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” And he said, it was left upon record for Christians that they might not be discouraged, for that even the Man after *GOD*’s own heart had his discouragements.

D

My

My dear friend, if you have no objection we will write on Sunday evening or Monday morning early, and give one another the texts, and our thoughts on the sermons we have heard, which will make them more profitable to us, and I hope I shall then be able to remember more than I used to do; but my memory is very treacherous about remembering any thing that is good. I must now, my dear friend, bid you adieu.

S. VOWELL.

P. S. Pray, my dear friend, excuse my breaking off so very suddenly, for I was called down to reading: pray let no creature see this, indeed I think you had better burn it as soon as you have read it.

Hackney, Nov. 18, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AS you signified to me (tho' not by letter) that you was pleased with my propofal of writing Sunday evening or Monday morning, I now inform you Mr. Bennet finished the subject he was on last Sunday, this morning. I doubt not but you remember the text: it was the

the 13th chapter of Corinthians, and the 5th verse—"Examine yourselves whether ye be in
 "the faith, prove your own selves, know ye not
 "your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in
 "you, except ye be reprobates;"—but he said
 it did not mean a direct state of reprobation,
 but that whosoever had not Jesus Christ with-
 in them, was disapproved of GOD; but he said
 that he did not mean for Christians to be dis-
 couraged, but to come to GOD through Christ
 with a full assurance of forgiveness of all their
 sins in and through him. There was three heads
 in the discourse, two of which Mr. Bennet
 spoke on last Sunday, and came to the third
 this morning: it was on the important duty
 of *self* examination, and how to conduct it.
 Mr. Bennet said, that people should examine
 themselves more, and not find fault with other
 persons. He said, they looked at their
 neighbour's vineyard, and found fault with it,
 while at the same time their own was very
 much neglected. — He added a great deal
 more; but alas! my very treacherous memory
 has lost it; but I hope by going on in this
 manner, I shall be enabled to remember more.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AS I had no time to go on with this letter,
 I cannot inform you about the afternoon, as I

have forgot it ; indeed I cannot remember my tasks and every thing else.

Indeed, my dear friend, I am very much afraid that our correspondence will only be on Sunday, for I am sure that we have no other time for to write to one another : but however, we will comfort ourselves by thinking that the holidays are very near, and then I hope we shall be able to write oftener, which will give great pleasure to your very faithful, sincere, and affectionate friend,

SOPHIA VOWELL.

Hackney, December, 1787.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I DID not hear till yesterday of your having lost your kind brother. Indeed, my beloved friend, I truly sympathize with you. Yesterday I was coming to your house, and just as I got to the door, Maria came out : I then enquired how you did, and likewise how your brother did ; but alas ! how was I shocked when she said, He is dead. I intend calling on you to-morrow, to bring you the letters ; and, if it will be agreeable, I will come again Wednesday,

day, as I am quite uneasy on your account. When I came home, I began to think, and was afraid, that you would see him and get his disorder; but my Mother comforted me by saying, that, if it was catching, I might be sure that your Mother would not let you see him, as it could do you no good now he was dead. But, my dear friend, I hope that this affliction will be sanctified to you; for you know in *GOD's* word it is said, "whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Maria could not inform me of any particulars concerning him, and I should be much obliged to you, if, in your next letter, you will inform me whether he was sensible of his death, whether you saw him in his illness, and above all, whether he has left any testimony that he was prepared for his awful change.—Oh, my dear friend, this is a loud call to each of us, "Be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." Let us then be preparing, for we are none too young to die.—We might as well been called from time into eternity as your dear Brother. But I quit the subject, for I only renew your grief, and shall only add, that I am your truly sympathizing and affectionate friend,

SOPHIA VOWELL.

Hackney, December, 1787.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I HAVE received your kind yet distressing letter, and intend, if the weather will permit, to call on you to-morrow : indeed I was much disappointed that I could not come yesterday.—I suppose Maria told you I call'd at your house Saturday, and can't but say was much surprized to see her : indeed, as you say, she appears no more affected than as if nothing had happened. I wish very much to see you, and fully purpose to come—My dear Mother has felt very much for you, and desires her kind love—I am very sorry to hear you are but poorly, tho' indeed I don't wonder at it, after the fatigues and anxieties you have been in for this week past—And now, my dear friend, one of your earthly comforts is removed, I hope your mind will be more set on Heaven and Heavenly things—I am sure my poor petitions are lifted up to God for you, that this may prove a sanctified affliction ; and as I hope and trust your departed brother is gone to the regions of Eternal Bliss, you have only to mourn on your own account ; and it would be very unkind to wish him back to this our Earth,
which

which is so full of Sin and Sorrow and Pain, when we consider that he is gone to Heaven, where there will be no more Sin, &c. My dearest friend, I have only time to add that I am, and ever will be yours, &c.

Hackney, December 2, 1787.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

MR. Bennet gave us a glorious sermon indeed this day. His text was in the 2d Epistle of Peter, 1st chap. 1st and 2d verses: he has preached from them before, and I dare say you remember the words.—I very much wished you had been there, as I can give but a very imperfect account. He said, before he began he must give a kind of caution, that weaker Christians may not be driven to despair, and that the precious faith of which the Apostle speaks is the same in its effects; yet it did not always have the same effect on some people as on others, but that weak Christians' faith was as precious in God's sight as those of stronger. He said that, even in the same persons, their faith was very different at different times—as, for instance, in Peter, when he was on

the water, that he was so fully convinced of his Lord and Saviour's power and all-sufficiency, that he walked on the water with all the confidence as if he was on dry land; but that as soon as he began to compare Christ's power with that of the Elements, his faith became wavering, and was going to sink.—Mr. Bennet then addressed himself to persons who had not obtained like precious faith: he said he was afraid there was some of that description there, and, my dear friends, I would intreat and beseech you to cry unto *GOD* while yet there is hope; and that *GOD* was inviting them to come, saying, "My yoke is easy, and my burden then is light. Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He added much more, but my time and memory would not permit me to add: he spoke to persons who had obtained that precious faith—But I can add no more than that I am your affectionate friend,

SOPHIA VOWELL.

[The six preceding Letters were written when Miss VOWELL was between twelve and thirteen years of age.]

Hackney, November 30, 1789.

MY DEAREST UNDERWOOD,

MR. Bennet gave us two excellent sermons yesterday, but I liked him best in the afternoon : his text in the morning was in the 4th chapter of St. John, and the 41 and 42 verses.

He shewed the difference of Faith :

1st. There is a doctrinal Faith.

2d. A saving Faith.—A person may be possessed of doctrinal Faith, that is, understand all the doctrines and be perfectly acquainted with the Theory of Religion, and yet not be possessed of saving faith.

His text in the afternoon was in the 5th chapter of Theſſalonians and the 16th verse, “ Rejoice Evermore.” He shewed in what the Believer had to rejoice at all times, and in all situations. Comprehensively, he had to rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the *GOD* of his Salvation :

To

To joy and rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ in his *offices* as Prophet, Priest, and King; and in himself as their Saviour and Redeemer.

I have been pausing a considerable time, with the pen in my hand, and cannot recollect any more of this choice discourse. I wish you had been there, as I am certain you would have admired him.

I really do not take it kind that you have not called upon me for so long a time, as I am sure it is your turn to call upon *me*; however I should not have stood upon that ceremony, if I could conveniently have called; but, my dear, we have had a death in the family. Do not be alarmed, it is not a person for whose loss we are inconsolable: but, I think, the faults of the dead ought to be buried with them, therefore shall say no more concerning them. As he married ———, we were obliged to put on black, but we do not mourn in the least; and as that is the case, we have been rather busy preparing for the last week: this is a very good time of the year to wear that colour. Tho' we do not regret the death of this man, yet certainly we may hear a voice in it, saying unto us, "Be ye also ready, for ye know

not

not in what hour the Son of Man cometh." Oh! may we be prepared for that awful event, that when the summons comes, we may have nothing to do but to die and enter into the joy of our Lord. Then there will be no more sin nor sorrow, nor any more pain: *GOD* himself will wipe away all tears from our eyes, and we shall be happy, inexpressibly happy to all Eternity. But, on the other hand, if we are unprepared, how will our naked souls appear before our offended Judge! In vain shall we call upon the rocks and mountains to cover us. We must hear that dreadful sentence pronounced against us, "Depart, ye cursed, into *EVERlasting Fire*, prepared for the Devil *and his Angels.*" Oh! my dear friend, may we be prepared, and meet in the blissful regions above, never, never to part more; which is the sincere and earnest prayer of your affectionate friend,

SOPHIA VOWELL.

Hackney, May 25, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HOPE your grandmother is perfectly recovered by this time, of which I shall be very glad to hear. We are continually reminded
that

that we are mortal by the indisposition of ourselves or the illness of our friends ; therefore let us endeavour to prepare for that awful event, which is the only certain thing in this life. It is appointed for all men once to die, and after death the judgment.—Oh ! may *we* be prepared to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, clothed in his perfect righteousness.

I think my dear brother has not been well since he came from the Mill : I think that journey did him more harm than good. He has a cough, and is very poorly still, but hope medicine, air, and exercise, will be blessed to his recovery of health and strength.

My father and mother are gone to _____, to see their relations there. One of them is in great distress, having just lost an only son, who died very suddenly, being found dead in his bed. Such instances of the uncertainty of life ought to make *us* examine ourselves whether *we are prepared*, if it should please *GOD* to call us in such a sudden manner out of time into eternity. If prepared, I think it a great happiness to have such an easy dismissal—for to those that are—sudden death—sudden glory,—May this be our unspeakable happy case !

I wish

I wish GOD would give me a more thankful frame of spirit for all his goodness towards me. If I look round, how many are there far more deserving, who have not near so many comforts and conveniences as I enjoy. I may well say, Lord, why am I thus favoured far above thousands who love thee more, and serve thee better!

August 26, 1790, 8 o'clock evening.

MY DEAREST UNDERWOOD,

I AM in a very, very melancholy mood this evening (I have not got you with me to enliven me by your conversation). I think my *dearest*, *dearest* brother has look'd very ill all day, and his *cough* seems to tear him almost to pieces. GOD only knows what the issue of it will be. I almost *despair*, tho' I would wish to keep up; for I know *nothing* is impossible with GOD: he can raise up from the very gates of Death. Oh! I would wish to be convinced that the Judge of all the earth cannot but do *right*. May this *great* affliction be sanctified to us all; then shall we have reason to praise the Lord. I would hope it is in covenant love and mercy to our souls; then

it

It will be *well* indeed. Ah, my dear friend, if the *thought* of *parting* is so very very *distressing*, what must the *dreadful* reality be! Oh! the *thought* is misery indeed. Adieu—That word *always* conveys a melancholy idea; but when applied to a separation by *death*, it is almost inexpressibly dreadful. You, my dear, can feel for me; for you have tasted of the *bitter* bitter cup, which I greatly fear we shall shortly have to drink. *Brother*—Ah! it is a dear, a very dear and tender name: and when I think it is a name I *fear* I cannot *long* make use of, it almost overwhelms me with grief.

August 29, Sabbath evening.

I HEARD an excellent sermon this morning, preached by a Mr. Winter. His text was in the xth chapter of Luke:—*One* thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part that cannot be taken away from her—this *one* thing is religion. He shewed the three characters our Lord gave of it.

1st. It is *needful*.

It is needful in every situation in life: and to prove it was so, he gave a description of a
person

person in every situation in life, in death, and in eternity, *without* it.

2dly. It is *good*.

3dly. It can never be taken away.—Many things are very necessary and desirable, but very difficult to be attained, and very uncertain when they are: but this can never be taken away. The improvement was, To enquire whether we were possessed of this *one* thing; and if we were, to be very thankful for it: if not, not to despair, for that was improper for any *living* man; but to consider—This is the accepted time---*this* is the day of salvation---Behold, I stand at the door and knock---If any hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him---Oh, may we hear his voice, and open the door of our hearts; and may he come in, and fill us with joy and peace in believing, is the earnest prayer of your sincere and affectionate

S. VOWELL.

October 10, 1790.

I HAVE been reading a hymn out of "Songs in the Night;" one verse of which is, I think,

think, exactly suited to me, and I shall here transcribe it:

I want to have my soul resign'd,
Submissive to thy will;
 I want a meek and humble mind,
 I want my wants to feel.

The last line is particularly expressive of what I want; indeed it is a very sweet hymn. I wish I was like the young woman who made it, and could adopt all her language through the book as my own. My *dearest* *dearest* brother seems to think he has raised a little blood this evening. *GOD forbid!* for if he did, I could not have the *least* hope of his recovery. Indeed, as I told you in my last Letter, I have hardly any now: but when he is rather cheerful, and with sitting by the fire has got a little colour, and looks as he used, one cannot help having some small hopes that he may yet be spared as a monument of the Lord's goodness and mercy.

But what do I say? It may be in goodness and mercy to him, if he is removed: for he may be taken from the evil to come, or to prevent his committing some great sin that the Lord sees he could not have resisted. Oh! that I had an abiding sense upon my mind that the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right.

Wed-

Wednesday Evening, Hackney, Oct. 13, 1790.

I AM very low this evening, my dear U——; for I think my foot gets worse, and I am very much afraid it must be opened. I hate the thought of having any thing to do with surgeons, for I think many do much more than is absolutely necessary; however, I would wish not to be too anxious about it (but I cannot help thinking of it), for the Lord knows what is right and best for us.—I have been reading some more of good Mr. Newton's Letters. I like them very much, they are so encouraging—and I am sure he is fully persuaded that all things work together for good to those that love *GOD*, and are the called according to his purpose. So am I—but I do not know that I am one of the called according to his purpose—I sincerely wish I was—but the motive, I think, is fear of being *everlastingly* miserable, and not (as it ought to be) fear of offending *GOD* and hatred of sin.—Oh! how very happy must those be who know they are *GOD*'s children, and, when they read the many promises there are in the Bible, may apply it to themselves, and take the comfort of them!—May that *be* your

E

happy

happy case, my dear friend !—Oh ! may you see that your inheritance is in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, nor thieves break through nor steal !—May you *know* that all things are working together for your good—and that though afflictions for the present are not joyous, but grievous—yet that they shall at last yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness !

I shall be *very* glad to see you, and fully expect that pleasure to-morrow ; so I hope you will not disappoint me.

I hope to receive a long *long* letter from you very soon, as you will have *four* of mine to answer when you have received *this*.—I suppose you generally go up into *your* closet a little time before supper (I always do), and then you might write to me ; that is the way I find time to write so much to *you*.

I am called, therefore must wish you a good night.—Believe me, my dear girl, your truly sincere and affectionate friend,

SOPHIA VOWELL.

Hackney,

Hackney, Oct. 25, 1790.

WHENEVER I am *low* it seems a relief to write to my *dear* friend, and inform her what it is that causes my uneasiness—The present is the ill state of my *dear dear* brother's health.—Dr. Lister has seen him to-day (for Dr. Pitcairn's medicine was not of any use to him), and prescribed for him.—He asked my brother, what he thought of himself? He answered, that he thought he was *dangerously* ill.—Dr. Lister said he would not flatter him, he thought the same—but would not have him discouraged—for he had *youth* on his side—and some did recover they could not tell how.—Oh! that it might please GOD to restore my *dearest* brother!—But I would wish for *submission* to his will—but *indeed* the thought of *parting* is *very very* cutting.—I hope it will not be an ETERNAL separation—but that we shall *All* meet at the right hand of GOD—there shall be no more sin nor sorrow, nor any more pain—there shall all *tears* be wiped from our eyes, and we shall be *for ever* with the Lord.

Oct. 26, Tuesday Evening, past 8 o'Clock.

AS you have not been to see me, my dear U——, I fear your mother is not well;—

for I think, if that was not the case, you would find *time* to visit a *sick friend*: indeed it would be charity—for I *cannot* come and see you, or I *would*.—If she is unwell, I can sincerely *sympathize* with you; for I know by painful experience what you must feel at the indisposition of so dear a parent.—Till one have sickness in our own family, I think one cannot feel *sufficiently* for others—But that is not our case; for we know what it is to see a *beloved* brother *declining* in the bloom of life;—and, as Dr. Young expresses it, ours is the

——— dreadful post of observation,
Darker every hour.———

I fear you will hardly be able to read this letter, it is so blotted with my *tears*;—but it cannot be sinful to grieve for our friends; it is natural—at the tomb of Lazarus Jesus *wept*.—Adieu! my dear girl. May you never have to *weep* at the loss of beloved relatives and friends; at least not for many many years;—but be enabled to *convince* them, that it is the *study* of your life to render theirs comfortable. Accept my kind love, and believe me ever yours,

S. VOWELL.

Hackney,

Hackney, November 22.

I WAS very *unhappy* yesterday, my dear friend, and am very *uneasy* to-day, about my *dear dear mother's* health.—She was taken very poorly Saturday evening with the spasms, and had a very indifferent night, and was *very ill* all day Sabbath-day—almost in an agony.—I stayed at home with her all day;—for I think to be with and attending upon our friends when they are ill, is the only consolation one can receive.—You have experienced it often, for your *dear mother* has but poor health;—therefore you can tell what my *feelings* were better than I can describe them.

Nov. 24, Wednesday, 2 o'Clock.

MY dearest mother is better (tho' not well), and gone to London with my beloved brother for a ride.—You know not, my dear U———, what I feel while I write the words *beloved brother*. Alas! I fear the time is not far distant when I shall have none to whom I may apply it.—The weather was very unfavourable yesterday for invalids, and he was extremely languid all day. The day before, whenever he coughed, he had so violent a
 pain

pain in his side, that it quite gave one pain to see him—indeed I think he gets weaker and weaker almost daily.

Wednesday Evening, 9 o'clock.

THIS day has been very agreeable for my *dearest brother*; and he has been more cheerful than I have seen him for several days; but I was very very low this morning while they were in town, for I was *quite* alone (and could have enjoyed a *tête-à-tête* with my friend *much*—but I believe *she* never will “*find time*” to come and see how her Sophia does).

I sat in the chair my *brother* occupies, and a croud of melancholy ideas filled my mind; had you been with me, your conversation would have dissipated them; or at least mitigated them.

While my mother was so much indisposed Sabbath-day, that line in Young was continually in my mind,

Woes cluster, rare are *solitary* woes;

and you may easily imagine how I applied it.

Was I writing to any one but *you*, I should certainly *apologize* for speaking only on the melancholy

melancholy subjects that are uppermost in my heart (tho', indeed, I do not write to any but you on that account) ; but I *know* you *sympathize* with me, and that affords consolation to

Your affectionate and afflicted friend,

SOPHIA VOWELL.

Monday afternoon, 3 o'clock.

I AM very poorly ; do come and see me very soon, or I shall think you have not got inclination.

F I N I S.

mean body objects that are appearing in my
head (the) indeed, I do not write to any
one on this subject; I am I know you are
in some with this kind of consolation



Your truly, J. M. Smith

JOHN M. SMITH

I AM very sorry to hear of the loss of
your book, but I think you have not lost
nothing

1858

